

See

THE
WISCONSIN
ARCHITECT

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE STATE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS
WISCONSIN CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF ARCHITECTS
BUILDING CONGRESS OF WISCONSIN



Has It Happened to You?

How Can We Function for the Small-house Client?

Who Built That Building?

Legal Decisions

Has It Happened To You?

A few days ago Mr. Louis Allis of the Louis Allis Company related an experience he had which should be interesting to all Architects, Heating Contractors or Engineers.

Mr. Allis determined to divide one long hot water radiator into two shorter ones with the thought of being able to get more accurate control over the room temperature.

When the change was made the supply of one radiator was immediately adjoining the return of the other radiator. When this change was completed the job circulated perfectly. The pipe covering was then applied and the supply and return pipes were so close together that in covering the same they covered both pipes as one, with the result that they no longer secured circulation in either radiator. Mr. Allis had the covering removed and again the circulation was perfect.

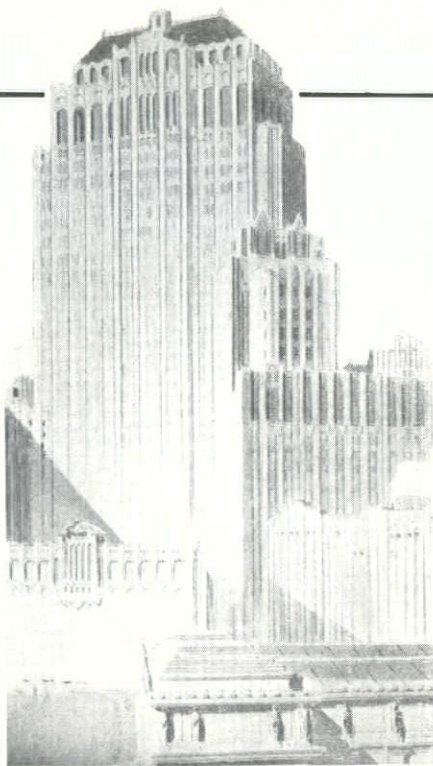
Mr. Allis wants to warn his friends in the Architectural profession and Heating lines either to leave covering off return hot water pipes or at least not to cover the supply and return pipes under assembled covering.

Look for Seal of Approval

(See Page 6, December Issue)

As of January 1, 1937, the following manufacturers of lead plumbing goods were licensed to use the recently announced "Lead Industries' Seal of Approval" on lead pipe, traps and bends meeting the standards of the Lead Industries Association:

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Baker Lead Mfg. Co.
Cambridge Smelting Co.
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W. A.-1

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How Can We Function For The Small-house Client?

By HARRISON GILL

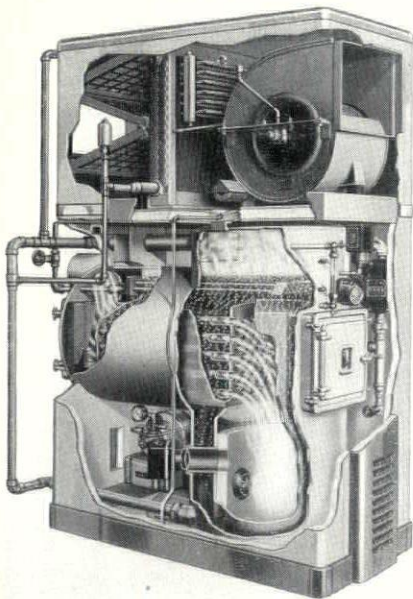
There may be examples on record of a profession becoming established in a specific field of service by using the services of advertising copywriters, propagandists and public relations experts, but I have not been able to find them. It seems to me that, if a profession fails to function, there is some more fundamental fault than mere popular ignorance. And yet we are asked to believe that the primary cause for the failure of architects to control small-house building is only a question of popular education. In fact, it has been proposed that we institute a general propaganda campaign for all architects.

Let us consider for a moment such buildings as public libraries, railroad stations, hospitals, banks, state buildings, schools, monuments, churches, and the country homes of the very wealthy. Does any one imagine that the people who control such projects need to be taught that competent and complete architectural services are desirable? It is practically impossible to build any of them without an architect; he is an economic and technical necessity. The mere fact that most small houses have been and still are being built without genuine architectural control, certainly indicates that in this field he is not essential from any standpoint.

Obviously the only type of practice which could expect any great benefit from an educational advertising

campaign would be small-house work. The basic problem in planning such a campaign is not the simple one of carefully explaining, in elementary language, that the houses we build are beautiful, well constructed and efficiently managed; the real problem is to discover why the work is not being done by architects now. It is rather easy to demonstrate that architects can design, know good materials and workmanship, are familiar with the business side of building procedure. These facts are so elementary that nearly every one already knows them, and no matter how effectively they are told, the popular answer would probably be: "So what?" Those who think that we can change the whole present setup in small-house building, by telling people how good we are, are scheduled for an expensive disillusionment. As long as we try to maintain the attitude that we, as architects, have failed to control the minor residential work because we are not appreciated, the home-building industry will continue merrily on its way without us.

Historically, architecture—as a profession distinct from the business of building construction—never did play any important part in the execution of small homes. During our colonial period the well-trained carpenter and builder did a creditable job with small houses. The best of their work still holds a high place in both design and construction. Until the 'nineties the well-trained architects had their hands full designing important structures. Since the days when our ancestors emerged from log-cabins into carpenter-and-



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mason-built houses, the contracting builder has had control of this work. He has not usurped our sphere; in one sense it is we who are trying to take his.

The builder who goes to the prospective home owner has three arguments to persuade his prospect that an architect should not have control of the job. These are:

1. "Architects are all right for office buildings and churches, but they do not understand small houses; they make them cost too much.

2. "The architect's fee is very high and is an avoidable extra to the cost of construction.

3. "The architect does not know what the house will cost, and you will have to pay him even if he designs a house which you cannot afford to build."

If the prospect counters with the statement that he must have a well-designed and beautiful house, the answer is simple: "All the best houses designed by architects are published in magazines; we can choose what we want."

Unless we can build up adequate answers to all of the builders' arguments in the mind of the prospective home owner, no advertising of services can succeed. A flat denial of all the charges and the presentation of counter charges will not work.

Let us start out by admitting that years of experience in large-scale construction does not necessarily qualify an architect to produce an adequate inexpensive home. Without mentioning any names, I recall three recent examples. In one case a well-known architect of semi-monumental work attempted a four-thousand-dollar house; the lowest bid was eight thousand. In another an internationally known firm undertook a remodeling job on a residence, which, on completion, cost at least 50 per cent more than had been anticipated, and then looked as if it had been done in 1890. The third type was more difficult to disclose and was never known to the owner: only the builder and the craftsmen realized how unnecessarily expensive the house had been made by details and specified procedure which were not adaptable to residential work. It is easy to tell people to "see an architect first!" It is going to be much more difficult to tell them to select the right architect.

The general belief that architect's fees are an avoidable extra is the most difficult argument to meet in any general advertising campaign, not because it is necessarily true, but because architects are not agreed among themselves on the answer. A large group of very competent and skillful designers wish to accept this challenge with the statement that, of course, people will have to pay more for fine design. Another group, realizing that they are not practising in a luxury field, but are producing a necessity, believe that it is possible to produce a well-designed and soundly built house by a procedure in which their fees are absorbed by careful planning, simplified practice, and detailed control of construction. Until we can decide which attitude is to be presented to the public, we are not ready to start any concerted program for education.

My own sympathies are entirely with the second group, because I believe that clients who are sufficiently cultured and are in a position to make the extra expenditure for art's sake, already have selected their architects and do not need any enlightenment. People who do not use an architect because they believe he is too expensive will not be persuaded by telling them that he is an artist

and worth his hire. As our campaign stands now, we shall have to tell them, first, to choose an architect who is intimately familiar with small-house work, and then they must decide whether they want a man who will approach their problems primarily as aesthetic, or functional and economic.

The third argument of the builder seems to me to be the strongest. The client is asked to sign a binding contract which will force him to pay about 60 per cent of the total fee, without any contractual assurance that a design will be produced within his means. The builder, with his lumber-yard plan book, can tell just what each house will cost before he starts, before any contract is signed. All the well-founded arguments based on the professional functions of an architect in securing bids and enforcing specifications will not answer the primary question of the owner: "What assurance have I that you, as an architect, will be able to design me a house for what I have to spend?"

When we find the answer to this problem we shall have control of the small-house field. Our standard contract form and codes of practice offer no solution. The difficulties from our standpoint as architects are apparent. We cannot guarantee a price, or find any builder who would do so, for a house which has not been designed, unless the price quoted is obviously exorbitant. Without long conferences and study we do not know just what kind of a house will meet the client's full requirements. This condition is real, and forms the greatest handicap in our attempt to gain control of small-house building. If it were simple to overcome we should probably have done it long ago. If we are going to stand pat on our method of charging and practising, we might just as well accept, now, the builder as the controlling element in home building, and make our arrangements with him rather than with the client. Many architects have done so already, accepting fees from the builder for a partial service. Others have virtually become builders themselves in trying to meet this phase of competition.

Rather than capitulating to the builder because he can guarantee a price and we cannot, let us see what other ways there may be to attack the dilemma. Our schedule of charges, our standard forms, standards of practice, and codes of ethics have been built up and developed for large projects. It is not a question of being unable to use them on small commissions, because they are being used daily, but rather that the theory behind their form is a theory developed from large projects.

Develop a contract form in which the cost of the house is mentioned, but not guaranteed; in which the owner agrees to pay a predetermined lump-sum amount which approximates the cost to the architect of drafting and blue prints; then if bids are secured within the cost mentioned, the full fee for drawings and specifications would become payable at that time. Under such an arrangement the architect would be gambling his overhead and profit on a small project against his own ability to do what he tells his client he thinks he can do. A method similar to this has been tried with reasonable success by some architects. It does not seem to me as fundamentally unethical or dangerous from a business standpoint. It may be a solution for one of the most difficult problems in selling an architect's full services on small homes.

—ARCHITECTURE
FEBRUARY, 1936

Who Built That Building?

By NATT PIPER

While visiting in a certain city I was riding one day with my friend Aldrich who is a building contractor. As we drove down the business streets he pointed out here and there a structure, saying each time, with pride, "I built that building." And this was the remark he repeated again, gesturing towards a very fine looking office building, which I judged to be about ten years old.

"That is a pretty good looking job," I remarked. "I think you have done a lot towards improving _____," naming the city.

"I have," he said.

"Who was the architect for that last one you showed me?" I inquired.

"I've forgotten. Let's see, was that Billy Wilson, or Hart and Lore? Bless if I remember, now," he replied casually. "That's the Telegram Building. I did that job in 1920. How time flies!"

We arrived at our destination and my friend drove on as I went to the office in which I had an appointment.

After an hour or so I started to leave, as one of the younger men to whom I had been talking came into the reception room pulling on his gloves. "Which way are you going, Mr. Alanson?" he inquired. "I'm on my way to Tenth and Main."

"So'm I," I said.

"Fine. I'll take you right there. Let's go."

And so, alongside another driver, I traversed the same street that I had previously ridden through.

"My dad built that building," proudly declared my companion, pointing to an imposing office building. "Good job of brick work, don't you think?"

"Yes. It certainly is," I said, recognizing with some little surprise the last structure my friend Aldrich had pointed out. "So your father did that?"

"Yeah, one of his first jobs. He built it for Old Man Liff. Do you know the Lafayette Hotel? That's one of the old man's jobs too; he's built a lot of 'em down town here."

"Is your father an architect or a contractor?" I inquired.

"Architect! H-e-l-l- no! He's a contractor."

"But I thought Aldrich built the Telegram Building," I countered.

"Oh, yeah, sure—well he did. That is, he was the general contractor. But dad did all of the brick work."

"Oh, I see," I said.

Now, I have heard many men tell of their experiences in building, for I travel for a firm whose business brings me into contact with real estate men, contractors, and occasionally an architect. It suddenly dawned upon me that I had often heard the expression, "I built that building," yet I never gave it much thought until, in the same afternoon, two different contractors were credited with the erection of the same edifice. This coincidence intrigued me a bit but my interest soon waned as I went about my work.

The following day I called upon one of the leading bankers and took him to lunch. From our table, near a window, we both could see the Telegram Building. I said to Mr. Banker, "The old Telegram looks just as good as ever, doesn't it?"

"Well it ought to. When we built that job we saw that the right stuff went into it."

"I didn't know you put that up—I thought it belonged to a Mr. Liff. So you're interested in it, are you?"

"Of course it does belong to Liff," returned Mr. Banker, "but we're 'interested,' as you say, for we built it—I mean we furnished the money."

"Oh, I see," said I.

Here is my chance to hear that architect's name, I thought. "Who designed the building," I queried.

"Henry Richter designed it. Mighty smart fellow: he saved us a lot of . . . Why, Henry!" he exclaimed, as a man came towards our table. "Hey, Harry, I want you to meet Mr. Alanson, an old friend of mine. Just talking about you. Isn't that strange? Just this minute told Alanson what fun we had when we built the Telegram Building." He introduced us and continued, "Richter's a structural engineer. I know you will let him eat his little old lunch with us, won't you?" with a nod towards me.

"Surely. Three can't be a crowd in this hectic hustle to feed," quoth I. "So you designed the Telegram, Mr. Richter!"

"Yep. One of my first jobs. And I want to tell you that good construction pays: shove the steel into 'em if you want 'em to last. Make the owner pungle up the jack. I had a heck of a time with Old Man Liff to convince him that extra bracing was worth the money. But I finally won out, and there she stands. I'll admit I'm proud of the old shanty."

As I was dressing in my hotel room that evening the conversation during lunch returned to me. In addition to the architect, for there certainly *must* have been one, four different fellows "built" the Telegram Building! Each of the four implied, strongly, that he was its creator. I was willing to bet a thin dime they wouldn't claim the baby if it looked like the devil. I wondered again who the architect was. By the looks of things there was a conspiracy to keep him entirely out of the picture! "Yeah—Mr. Banker built it, did he? Like fun." I muttered, "By gum! This is getting interesting. I'm going to find out who 'built' that building." Or rather I would discover the man who was responsible for its fine appearance. Number one man, the contractor, wasn't; number two, the brick mason, couldn't have been; number three boy, the banker, and, lastly, the engineer, didn't put the good looks into it. Next day I could easily complete my work and have several hours to spare before train time. I would use this time in finding out something I was determined to know.

Right after lunch I was standing in the corridor of a building, waiting for the elevator, when my eye caught the sign, "Palmer and Stephens, Architects" on a nearby door, "Great!" I thought, "here's where I learn the name of the architect for the Telegram." I entered the office. A tall young fellow came to me and I immediately came to the point. "I'm somewhat of a stranger in town; I happened to be passing your door and I have wanted to ask some architect a question," I said.

"If I can answer it, I'll be glad to," courteously replied the young man.

"I want to know who designed the Telegram Building."

"That's easy," he said, "I did! Right in this office. Why do you ask?"—with a grin. He pulled down his vest and visibly expanded.

After assuring him I was actuated by curiosity only, I asked, "By the way, are you Mr. Palmer or Mr. Stephens?"

"Neither. My name is Winkler—J. Johnson Winkler," he answered.

Again in the corridor I glanced at the sign, "Palmer and Stephens." Yet Winkler had just forcefully told me that *he* had designed the Telegram. "Right in this office." But Richter had designed it too! Now I may have been altogether too inquisitive, and I may have been dumb—but, in any case, I knew instinctively that I was not through with my search. I started for a telephone. I was going to begin to unearth, discover and find out the name of the ding-busted architect who had "built" the Telegram Building!

"Hello—is this Hart and Lore's office?" I voiced into the receiver.

"Yes. Mr. Lore speaking," answered the instrument.

"Mr. Lore, I picked your number at random. I wanted to ask if you, or some one in your office, can tell me the name of the architect who built—who drew the plans and specifications for the Telegram Building, corner of Eighth and Main. Or whether you can tell me of some architect who knows his name," I ended, quite incoherently.

"That was one of my jobs. Who is this speaking, please?"

"Alanson is my name," I answered, "and if you will be in your office for fifteen minutes, I'll drop in. I want to talk to you—that is, if it's convenient."

"Perfectly all right, Mr. Alanson, I'll wait for you." Lore was graciousness itself.

I was in Hart and Lore's office within five minutes. Mr. Lore introduced himself and I acknowledged my name. His office walls were hung with colored pictures—you know, the kind architects make. Among them I saw a huge picture of the Telegram Building. It was being dusted by a stenographer. Mr. Lore placed a chair for me opposite his own and remarked, "Fine day, Mr. Alanson."

"Yes—nice weather we're having. I came to see you, Mr. Lore, about the Telegram Building. I like it very much and I wanted especially to know the name of the architect who drew the plans for it. And, as you told me you had, I now want a little more information."

"Surely, surely, Mr. Alanson. Pleased to tell you about it. Did you want to know the cost—or what? Glad to help; got all the data filed away. Fact is, prices are way down now; cracking good time to build. Labor is plentiful and labor's a big item in construction, you know. "That," outwardly swinging his hand to the large picture, "could be built for a great deal less today. Do you live here, Mr. Alanson? Haven't I met you before—or was that Mr. Alanson I once knew, a real estate man? Are you in the real estate business, Mr. Alanson?"

"No. I'm not in the real estate business," I replied to his genial questioning, "and I am more or less of a stranger in town, and I am not thinking of building—at present, anyway," I concluded.

"To be sure," said Mr. Lore. "Those things have to be done gradually. But I'll be tickled to death to knock out a quick sketch for you sometime—any time you say. No obligation, at all, just something to keep my fellows busy. You see we have twenty men in our organization. Like you to meet Roscoe Hart, my part-

ner. He 'tends to all the outside work. We've got quite a few jobs going now. I am in the office most of the time—you understand, I do all the designing."

"I see—and that's just in line with what I want to know. When you said that you had drawn the plans for the Telegram, did you mean you, yourself, or your firm?"

"Well—yes and no. I was the architect for the work—it's this way. When I first came here I was in partnership with another man by the name of Rohrbaugh—he's dead now—and we got a commission from Old Man Liff, to do a small tax payer on that corner. Well, to make a long story short, I convinced Liff that it would be better to strain a point, if necessary, and put up a better building. So I worked out that sketch over there and Mr. Liff liked it right off the bat. He was an old friend of my partner's and Rohrbaugh helped me a lot with the deal. In one way it was reviving an idea that those two old fellows had long talked of, and Rohrbaugh had sketched around on a twelve story. And I worked this sketch up," he concluded rather lamely and shifted a bit in his chair.

"Then really the architects for the building were you and Mr. Rohrbaugh?"

"I suppose that's right," he replied, very evasively, I thought.

"Now Mr. Lore, I don't want you to think me personal in any way and I am seeking after knowledge truly. I wonder if you will answer a few questions, which I assure you are put simply for the purpose of righting my ideas." Then I went on to sift this business to the bottom of the sifter. I finally got actual facts from Lore. Rohrbaugh, his partner at the time, had worked with Mr. Liff for many years; was his architect for several projects. Liff had wanted to erect one larger edifice before he passed on, and, between them, they had developed the scheme for the Telegram Building. Lore, a talented, energetic architectural draftsman had been working for Rohrbaugh and eventually the older man offered him a partnership which Lore quickly accepted. Then, with full consent of Rohrbaugh, Lore began the more active management of the office, including the completion of commissions that had hung fire for years. The Telegram was one. He told me that his partner had not only designed the structure but, in an effort to benefit his health, that he had also acted as superintendent of construction. "After all," he confessed, "it was the old man's baby and he was doing it for a friend, too. Rohrbaugh was really the architect, in every sense of the word."

"One more question," I said. "What parts did Harry Richter and J. Johnson Winkler play?"

"J. Johnson Winkler? J. Johnson! Sure, Jack Winkler, you mean. Why, Jack was a draftsman for us; maybe he traced some of the larger scale details. He's working for Palmer and Stephens now, and they're in our old office, the one I left to come here. Richter was working for George Ferguson, structural engineer. I suppose Harry was a squad boss, or something. Why? Do you know them?"

"Yes. I've met them both. Nice fellows—but 'twas just an idle question. Say, old man, I've got to rustle along; leave on the 5:10. No end of thanks for your time, and information. It clears up a lot for me and I have enjoyed the talk. Any time you're in my town, step in and see me," and I left.

Although this experience of mine was revealing, to say the least, I dropped it from my mind until after

dinner. Then, in the smoking compartment, speeding along—as we are now—I began a desultory conversation with an athletic looking fellow. In the rather long intervals, between our remarks, I thought how fortunate I had been in finally tracing down the architect for the Telegram Building. Mr. Rohrbaugh was the man, as Lore had admitted. I wondered why architects didn't put plates on their buildings, like those used on bridges. Lore had said that Rohrbaugh was a very shy and retiring man. Such fellows need a brass plate to talk for them.

"Here's Rochester, already," said my companion, glancing at his watch, "and right on time, too. I remember this town well. I built a coupla buildings here and one in _____," naming the city I had left.

"Quite a business—building— isn't it?" I remarked. "What building did you build in _____?"

"I built the Telegram Block there for Old Man Liff."

"Is that so? Do you mean that you prepared the plans for it—are you the architect?"

"H-e-l-l no!" he replied, "I was the carpenter foreman."

"Oh, I see," said I.



Legal Decisions of Interest to the Architect

BUILDING CONTRACTOR'S MATERIALS PASSING TO TRUSTEE IN BANKRUPTCY.

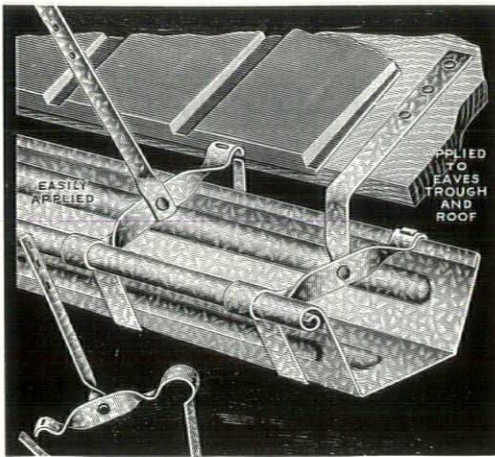
The Federal District Court for the southern district of New York holds that a provision of a building contract that in case of default on the part of the contractor the owner shall be entitled to retain and use all materials brought on the ground by the contractor is not enforceable against the trustee in bankruptcy of the contractor as to materials not owned by him or even in existence at the time the contract was made.—*In re Midtown Contracting Co.*, 238 Fed. 871.

BUILDING COLUMN PATENTS.

The Circuit Court of Appeals, Second Circuit, holds that patents Nos. 853,717, 844,973 and 844,974, for building columns, the improvement in which consisted of the filling of a cap telescoped into a hollow steel column with cement, in addition to filling the column itself with cement, and the insertion of a reinforced rod extending from the cement-filled casing of one column through the cement-filled cap into a socket of the superimposed column, is invalid for lack of invention.—*United States Column Co. vs. Benham Column Co.*, 238 Fed. 200.

WHEN SUBCONTRACTOR BOUND BY CONTRACTOR'S WAIVER OF LIEN.

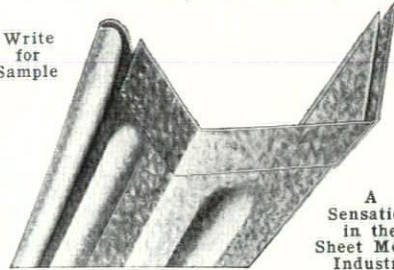
An owner had a contract with a general contractor for the erection of a building, in which contract all liens and claims or right of lien under the Illinois Mechanics' Lien Act for labor or materials furnished were waived. A subcontractor had a contract with the general contractor for the carpenter work. A lumber company furnished lumber to the subcontractor, which was used in the building under the general contractor's contract. In an action by the lumber company to enforce a lien for the lumber, it was held that the waiver in the general contract was binding upon all parties furnishing labor or materials under any subcontract and no claim for a lien could be maintained on account of the lumber furnished.—*Lurya Lumber Co. vs. Goldberg*, 198 Ill. App. 374.



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HOUSE HEATING—With gas, home heating is absolutely effortless. No fuel to order or store. No dirt, smoke or soot.

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